

PRESS RELEASE

House Armed Services Committee Bob Stump, Chairman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 13, 2001

CONTACT
Ryan Vaart
Meghan Wedd
(202) 225-2539

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BOB STUMP ON PRESIDENTIAL DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM ABM TREATY

"I concur with the President's decision to withdraw the United States from the 1972 anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. Although the ABM Treaty was once a useful contract, it is today the relic of a bygone era. The collapse of the Soviet Union a decade ago, the emergence of the United States as the world's only true superpower, and the September 11 terrorist attacks make clear that we are today living in a changed security environment that requires new approaches to protecting the United States homeland.

"I have long advocated deployment of a system to defend the United States and U.S. interests against ballistic missile attack. The threat of such an attack grows daily as the technology for building ballistic missiles continues to proliferate around the world. State sponsors of terrorism are known to possess weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. And, the September 11 attacks left no doubt that those who wish to harm the United States will attempt to exploit our greatest vulnerabilities – one of which is our inability to defend against ballistic missile attack. Yet, the United States has no effective way to protect Americans at home and abroad against ballistic missiles.

"For this reason, I was particularly concerned by the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization's recent decision to cancel portions of its last ballistic missile defense test in order to avoid possible conflicts with the ABM Treaty. This decision clearly indicates that once-theoretical ABM Treaty limitations on efforts to develop ballistic missile defenses are now reality. Given the magnitude of the ballistic missile threat, the time has come to withdraw from an outdated Cold War treaty that penalizes our legitimate efforts to provide for this nation's defense.

"Therefore, I applaud the President's decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty and to continue unfettered development of ballistic missile defenses. His decision is an important step towards building a new security environment for the 21st Century."

###